representatives of ILO and UNICEF. The important recommendations made in the seminar included, inter alia, health checkup of all children attending special schools, introduction of appropriate vocational stream in the special schools, proactive role by trade unions in the elimination of child labour and effective enforcement of child labour related laws in the child labour endemic areas.

[Translation]

Shortage of Post Offices in Bihar

2163. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is shortage of post offices in the rural districts, particularly in Godda, Jamui, Banka, Devdhar and Dumka of Bihar and a demand is being made again and again to open more post offices in these districts;

(b) whether STD facility has not been provided so far in Patharganwan, Poreyahar Blocks in Godda, Chakai and Sono district headquarters etc. in Jamui district despite telephone facility already in existence there;

(c) whether effective steps have not been taken so far in this regard despite the assurance of the Government; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) There is no shortage of Post Offices in the rural districts of Bihar particularly in Godda, Jamui, Banka, Devdhar and Dumka. The percentage of Gram Panchayat Villages covered by Post Offices in these districts as against the national average indicates that the postal network in the Gram Pancayat Villages in these districts compares quite favourably with the national Postal network in Gram Panchayat Villages. Details are given below:

Name of District	%age of Gram Panchayat Villages with Post Offices
Godda	55.68
Jamui	71.00
Banka	70.00
Devdhar	47.00
Dumka	57.54
National	50.00 %

There is, however, demand for opening more Post Offices in these districts.

(b) STD facility has already been provided at Patharganwan, Poreyahat and Chakai. STD facility at Sono is proposed to be provided during 1997-98.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

[English]

Introduction of EMU Trains in Kharagpur-Tata Section

2164. SHRI RUP CHAND MURMU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the hardships being faced by the people of Kharagpur-Tata section of South Eastern Railway due to inadequate passenger services;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to introduce more EMU trains in this section;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The existing services are by and large adequately catering to the traffic on the Kharagpur-Tata section. However, there are periods of extra rush.

(b) and (c) There is no such proposal at present.

(d) Operational and Resource constraints.

[Translation]

Irregularities in Expanaion of Telecom. Facilities

2165. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any irregularities have been noticed during expansion of telecommunication facilities in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last year;

(c) the number of contractors awarded contracts in Himachal Pradesh; and

(d) the total amount spent on laying of telephone cables during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some irregularities in laying of optical fibre cables at lesser depth than specified have been noticed during Departmental inspection in certain segments of 14 route lengths.

(c) A total of 226 contractors were awarded the cable laying contracts.

(d) A total of Rs. 666.17 lakhs was spent on these works during the last year.

[English]

Alliance Air Subsidiary of IA

2166. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the year in which the Alliance Air, subsidiary of Indian Airlines was formed;

(b) whether there is any difference in the pay structure and other service condictions between the Pilots, Engineers, Crew and other staff members of Indian Airlines and Alliance Air; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Alliance Air is the brand name of Airline operated by Airline Allied Services Limited (AASL), a wholly owned subsidiary set up by Indian Airlines Ltd. in 1983. Alliance Air commenced airline operations with effect from 15th of April, 1996.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. However, the terms and conditions of employment of personnel in Indian Airlines and Alliance Air are not comparable being two different organisations. Alliance Air is taking Pilots and other personnel on payment of deputation allowance from Indian Airlines and in case of non-availability, on contract basis from open market.

[Translation]

Stoppage/Halt of Trains at Railway Stations

2167. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the rules prescribed for stoppage/halt of a train at railway station;

(b) whether representations have been received from the Members of Parliament for providing halts/ stoppages of trains alongwith the details of railway stations during the last one year; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The stoppage of any train is decided keeping in view volume and nature of traffic, availability of existing services and characteristic of the train etc.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

2168. SHRI SANAT MEHTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to convert Mehsana-Patan meter gauge line into broad gauge line with a condition to discontinue uneconomic branch line of Kalol-Katosan;

(b) if so, whether the Government of Gujarat has requested to convert the above line into broad gauge without affecting present services of Kalol-Katosan; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Graphite Reserve in Bihar

2169. SHRI BRAJ MOHAN RAM: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of graphite reserve in Sokara village of Chainpur Block in district Palamu, Bihar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and time by which the exploration work is likely to be started in this area?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Sokara area was investigated by Geological Survey of India (GSI) during 1965-66. The investigation has located graphite bearing zone 160m long with an average width of 1.5m. The total reserves are estimated to be 6000 tonnes.

However, the proved reserves of graphite in the entire district of Palamu, Bihar are 78000 tonnes as on 1.4.90 (Source: National Mineral Inventory).

Presently there is no proposal to start further investigation in this area by the Geological Survey of India.

Gauge Conversion

2170. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN *ALIAS* PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the conversion work of meter gauge line into broad gauge line between Katihar and Jog-Bani section via Purnia is pending;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have prepared any scheme in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Updating survey for Gauge Conversion of Katihar-Jogbani via Purnia has been taken up.

Further consideration of the project would be possible once the survey report becomes available.